

I claim:

1. A stencil comprising:  
a stencil pattern having at least one stencilling opening formed therein;  
a first coating applied to one surface of the stencil and one or more side surfaces of the stencilling openings and having a surface tension greater than the surface tension of the stencil pattern; and  
a second coating applied to the opposite surface of the stencil pattern and having a surface tension less than the surface tension of the stencil pattern.
2. The stencil of claim 1, wherein the stencil pattern is stainless steel.
3. The stencil of claim 1, wherein the first coating is selected from the group comprising tungsten, tungsten carbide, tungsten nitride, nickel and nickel alloys.
4. The stencil of claim 1, wherein the second coating is a polymeric material.
5. A process for manufacturing a stencil for assisting in the application of a printable material comprising:  
forming a stencil pattern from a sheet of material impervious to the printable material and forming at least one stencilling opening therein;  
coating a top surface of the stencil pattern and one or more side surfaces of the stencilling openings with a first coating having a surface tension greater than the surface tension of the stencil pattern; and  
coating the bottom surface of the stencil pattern with a second coating having a surface tension less than the surface tension of the stencil pattern.

6. The process of claim 5 wherein the spreading of the printable material includes using a docking blade to assist in spreading the printable material across the top surface of the stencil pattern and through the stencilling openings.
7. A method for using a stencil pattern to apply printable material to a surface comprising:
  - forming a stencil pattern from a sheet of material impervious to the printable material and forming at least one stencilling opening therein;
  - coating a top surface of the stencil pattern and one or more side surfaces of the stencilling openings with a first coating having a surface tension greater than the surface tension of the stencil pattern;
  - coating the bottom surface of the stencil pattern with a second coating having a surface tension less than the surface tension of the stencil pattern; and
  - spreading the printable material across the top surface of the stencil pattern and through the stencilling openings onto the surface to which the printable material is to be applied.